Dear Friends,

In the last year, MIPC has seen a renewed vitality for which we are very grateful. We have a healthy worship life, a deeply committed congregation, a strong staff, and a leadership seeking how we can best serve our neighbors and grow in faith. Having found stability after a long transition, the MIPC Session believes it is essential that the church focus its attention on long-standing financial issues. The Session and its pastors have discussed this at length and have committed to bringing forth solutions in the healthiest possible way. **The first step toward this will be meetings after every worship service on June 4th.** At these meetings we have two goals: To outline the clear financial challenges and to talk about steps moving forward.

In February’s congregational meeting, we presented a summary of the 2017 Giving Campaign and a financial update. Despite a successful campaign in which we increased pledges by 3% over the prior year, MIPC faces two important financial challenges in the near future:

1. There remains an annual financial gap of ~$120,000 in MIPC’s regular operating budget. This gap has existed for a few years, but in past years Finance has been able to close the gap with one-time sources (e.g., one-time funding from Special funds, property tax refund). MIPC has enough one-time sources to get through 2017, but if present trends continue, 2018 will require ~$120,000 more revenue or cost cuts to cover next year’s budget.

2. We recently conducted a buildings and grounds study, which determined that, starting in 2018, MIPC will need to make significant investments to maintain our building (for example, a new HVAC system and flat roof that are both near end of life). This will require raising $1 million+ over the next five years. We also are committed to building a prudent reserve for the future of the church in the decades to come.

The second purpose of this meeting is discuss the steps we’ve begun to take and invite the congregation’s participation. We recognize these are large sums that will require creative solutions. So to be ready for 2018 and build a sustainable financial future for MIPC, we have formed a task force to evaluate non-Stewardship ways for the church to put itself on sound financial footing. While we are evaluating traditional approaches like a capital campaign, we are also considering a wide range of ideas, from increasing rental for the parking rented to King County Park & Ride, to developing MIPC’s undeveloped land, or even selling part of the
property. This task force will meet over the next few months to evaluate options and ensure that any options considered are concurrent with the rules of the Presbytery, after which Session will present a prayerful recommendation to the Congregation later this year.

We invite your creative and prayerful selves to participate in these conversations. We will be holding meetings following each service on **Sunday, June 4** for those who would like to learn more and be a part of this discussion. In these meetings, Finance Committee members and staff will be available to answer questions and discuss ideas for what changes need to happen to put MIPC on sound financial footing for its future.

Thank you for all the ways you support MIPC with your financial gifts, your time, your presence in the community, and your prayers. The Session believes that now is the right time, with God’s leading, to address this and we are confident that we can go forward together.

In Christ,

*The Mercer Island Presbyterian Church Session*